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## PLAYWRIGHT

(Continued from page 18)

When the excitement dies away, however, dramatic interest still remains. Usually a school play is soon forgotten except for the autographed programs and the nostalgic reminiscences. Not so at Highland. The workshop continues as Erhard discusses the performances with teachers, students, and parents. Cast members offer the greatest help, for in retrospect they can see the play more clearly and often offer valuable suggestions. Out of these post mortems come the final revision and eventual submission to a publisher. Thus the original script provides a full year's study of the theater.

Erhard's writing philosophy, still crystallizing, blends well with our theatrical plans. He began in a rather broad comic vein but soon became convinced that important and serious teen-age problems can be probed in school comedy. *The High White Star* had more than its share of laughs, especially in the irrepressible character of the school newspaper enthusiast. But the theme is far more serious—cheating in school. Erhard drew upon his own teaching experiences and observations to show how honesty treated too lightly in today's high schools can bring serious consequences. His latest script, now in the revision stages, deals with the problems of high school marriage. As Erhard puts it, "School life is full of problems, important to both students and adults, that are worth illuminating on stage. Without preaching, there is still a great deal to say in this type of play."

So we feel we're getting technically a "school comedy," although it actually transcends the typical play. It's thoughtful drama—aimed at today's teen-agers. We feel this is one of the best "school plays" possible, and thus the "resident playwright" helps make dramatics much talked about in a school without even a stage.

We do, however, have one dark cloud on the horizon. Two neighboring high schools are both eager for Erhard's next play; yet we'd like to experience for ourselves again that greatest stage thrill—the world premiere.